

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Dawn Roberson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comments about your May 2014 Report on State Schools  
**Date:** Friday, June 06, 2014 8:15:57 AM

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, June 06, 2014 12:38 AM  
**To:** Sunset Advisory Commission  
**Subject:** Comments about your May 2014 Report on State Schools

Dear Sirs,

The following are my comments in connection with your May 2014 report and recommendations:

**1. The numbers:**

Your findings are based on numbers that are the consequence of a decades-long campaign to deplete the state schools from residents. No wonder the population is reduced. This population of non-compus mentis has been the subject of a plan to deprive them of their habitual residences because it is cheaper to move them to community provider locations with reduced services and no accountability of abuse and neglect. Whenever there are reports of abuse or neglect incidents at the state institutions for the mentally retarded, the media often publicize these unhappy incidents and malign the state schools. However, they learn of these unhappy events because the state is accountable to the public and it is obligated to monitor its institutions. There are no such systems in place to monitor private provider group homes. The abuse and neglect that occur there is undetected and therefore ignored.

**2. The workshops and the lack of adequate activity centers in the community setting:**

Not all residents work all they long in the workshops. I have a daughter who is physically handicapped in addition to her mental retardation. She can work in her supervised environment. However, she needs other activities as well, such as art and music. I have not found any Houston area centers which would provide additional recreational activities after work in an appropriate format. The Brenham SSLC has provided extraordinary vocational supervision and additional activities which have increased my daughter's happiness and work output.

**3. Lack of adequate residential supervision and discrimination in community settings:**

My daughter is not verbal and she cannot communicate adequately. Therefore, she requires the checks and balances provided by an institutional setting. In addition, in my experience private providers discourage people with wheelchairs from joining their communities with "fire code" excuses. They do not include handicapped people in outings with transportation excuses. In other words, they discriminate against the very people they are supposed to serve.

**4. One size does not fit all:**

There are groups of parents such as those active in the Association for Retarded Citizens who are fortunate to have higher functioning children who are able to lead happy lives in community settings. My daughter needs the additional supervision and activities provided by the Brenham State Supported Living Center. When properly utilized, these centers generate economies of scale. Please allow for the right environment for each person and do not deprive those who need a more restricted setting from being in one if they need one.

**5. Violent and Aggressive Behavior:**

The push towards community settings in recent years has left the SSLCs with a demographic problem. The higher functioning individuals have been relocated to community settings while the remainder of the SSLC population is composed of a population that is either violent and aggressive or lower functioning, and they are in proximity to one another. The result is that there are incidences of violence in which the violent and aggressive residents attack the most vulnerable residents. Please protect the peaceful residents by segregating those who have a history of violent and aggressive behavior.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Respectfully submitted,

Luisa Kluger, Ph.D.  
Houston, Texas

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